

A fair go: Factors impacting on vocational education and training participation and completion in selected ethnic communities: Support document

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Appendix A: Acknowledgements

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Community intermediaries

Arabic speaking

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Turkish speaking

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Vietnamese speaking

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Community advisory group

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Appendix B: Methodology

Research design, limitations and areas for future research

This study was qualitative in nature and due to the sample size, interpretative in scope. Quantitative data collected during the research design phase were used to frame the analysis of the in-depth interviews and focus group sessions. The study does not purport to have gathered together a representative sample of Arabic, Bosnian, Cantonese, Spanish, Turkish or Vietnamese speakers. The sampling was not random but instead, purposive and to some extent opportunistic. The use of networks to recruit focus groups means that participants can not be assumed to be representative of their wider language communities. Nonetheless, every effort was made to have a broad sample of participants from the six language groups. Consequently, a matrix was used for the recruitment of focus group participants to ensure a diversity of VET experiences, age, gender, settlement histories and employment status.

An interim report was submitted for comment and review, to the 19 community intermediaries listed below. This was a means of checking that themes identified during the in-depth interviews were congruent with their experiences and understanding of the issues and additionally, to test the robustness of the information collected during the focus group stage. Feedback was received in writing or in some instances, verbally in face-to-face meetings. This group of 19 thus acted as an informal advisory group during the data analysis phase and served to validate the authority of the emerging themes.

The strengths of focus groups as a qualitative tool are well known. Of particular interest to me was the ability for participants who may not be fully conversant with a topic to utilise group dynamics to build, together, a more comprehensive understanding. In this way, an aspect of the methodology highlighted by Kitzinger (1994), namely that focus groups can ‘empower’ participants by creating a situation where the sharing of information becomes a building block for personal action, could create the opportunity to gain a greater understanding of VET and result in practical benefits for the participants in this study. This was particularly apposite in view of the fact that previous research had solidly documented the low level of awareness of VET amongst people from a language other than English background. Focus groups are also considered most effective in capturing cultural variables (Kitzinger 1995), making them especially suitable in cross-cultural research when ‘a researcher (analyses) the narrative used within the group to understand shared and common knowledge’ (p301).

As with all methodologies, a number of limitations have been equally well documented by researchers. The key shortcomings of focus groups specifically, and qualitative research in general, is the inability to generalise findings to a whole population due to both the small sample size and the methods of selection. This study displays these shortcomings; the sampling technique used as mentioned previously, was a judgement and not a random sample and it was also modest in size as 60 people took part in the in-depth interviews and 140 in the focus groups.

Notwithstanding the limitations of the methodology, this approach was judged to be the best way of beginning the process of capturing the on-the-ground knowledge of members of the six 6 language groups so as to achieve a deeper, more nuanced understanding of the factors that may impact on these communities’ VET participation and completion outcomes. The themes identified by this study offer an initial snapshot of the VET experiences of this group of Arabic, Bosnian,

Cantonese, Spanish, Turkish and Vietnamese speakers. A number of findings would greatly benefit from further sustained and detailed investigation, in particular, the role of the VET trainer and the professional skills and training practices that facilitate successful trainee outcomes. A larger scale study involving these and other language groups would also serve to compare and contrast VET participation and completion outcomes amongst people from diverse language and cultural backgrounds. Finally, further research into the impact of the various settlement experiences on participation and completion, in particular a study comparing and contrasting English language proficiency and educational background would be timely.

In-depth interviews

Whenever possible, an equal geographical distribution among interviewees was sought. Names were selected from a number of databases of multicultural community organisations, government agencies with in-house multicultural programs (primarily Centrelink) and community organisations providing multicultural programs. A Microsoft Excel worksheet was created with possible participants and these were contacted to request an interview. Often, during this initial contact and once people knew the topic of the research, other people who were perceived to have a greater understanding of VET were referred to us.

The researchers used a survey tool consisting of both open and closed questions. Space for note-taking during the interview was provided under each question. Each interview took between 45 and 60 minutes. Interviewees were encouraged to discuss the questions at length. This format made it possible to stop to clarify a point or seek further elaboration. During the interviews, some participants expressed an interest in a particular topic and time was set aside, once the interview was completed, to follow up the discussion.

The in-depth interviews supplied a wealth of information and pointed to unforeseen areas of enquiry. The focus group guide was developed after the analysis of the in-depth interviews and included additional research questions.

In-language focus groups

Face-to-face briefing sessions were conducted with the six bilingual and bicultural facilitators in each state. In order to share major learnings from the in-depth interviews, an *Interview summary report* was prepared, outlining some initial themes identified by the community intermediaries.

The recruitment of focus group participants followed two avenues: community intermediaries nominated possible participants and the bilingual facilitators approached people in their networks. The sample was, as mentioned previously, to a degree, opportunistic. Nonetheless, the final selection of participants for each language group was made using a focus group profile matrix outlining key demographic characteristics to be reflected within the group. This process resulted in focus groups composed of a range of life, educational, settlement and employment experiences.

The focus groups were by their nature, less formal than the in-depth interviews; they were selected as a research tool precisely because their more informal nature is well suited to capturing several perspectives about the same topic. The bilingual facilitators, applying a core principle that sees the group interaction become a central part of the method (Kitzinger 1994, Morgan 1988), encouraged participants to exchange personal anecdotes, comment on others' experiences and ask questions. In this process, the focus group guide was a prompt to guide discussion. Feedback from the bilingual facilitators was that conversation was wide ranging and open, and that some questions elicited vigorous responses. Hopefully the report captures some of this richness and energy.

Confidentiality and privacy issues

At the beginning of each in-depth interview, participants were advised that we were keen to use direct quotes. We explained that we believed that their insights into their communities would be significant in identifying major trends and that accordingly, we wished to acknowledge their

contribution explicitly. We also explained that once we had drafted the report, we would contact all those we wished to quote by forwarding a copy of the report, highlighting any quotes to be included and requesting their written permission. For those who did not wish to be personally acknowledged, we sought permission to use their words, ascribing them to the language group rather than to an individual.

During the recruitment phase, focus group participants were verbally advised by the bilingual facilitators that information collected would be presented in a way that preserved their anonymity. At this stage too, prospective participants were told that focus group discussions would be audio-taped. This was important, past experience has shown that some people, refugees in particular, may experience high levels of anxiety about recorded discussions. Anyone who felt uncomfortable about the prospect of being audio-taped was able to decline to participate. Permission to use recording equipment was again explicitly sought at the beginning of the focus group session. Permission to use quotes from the discussion was also requested. Participants were advised that individual privacy would be maintained as quotes would be attributed to the language group rather than to any one individual.

Data analysis

A database of responses to the in-depth interviews was established. The database was valuable in highlighting new issues and concerns not previously captured by the original research questions. The database was supported by the written transcripts of the 60 interviews.

The audio tapes from the 12 focus group discussions were translated into English and 12 transcripts prepared. A database with demographic details was established.

These data sources were then analysed in relation to the research questions and tentative trends noted.

Appendix C:

Participant demographic data

Table 1: Multicultural organisations registered to deliver training by State

State	Number
New South Wales	4
Queensland	3
Victoria	7
Total	14

Table 2: Small business owners by language group

Language	Number
Arabic	4
Bosnian	0
Cantonese	1
Spanish	2
Turkish	4
Vietnamese	2

Table 3: Reasons for enrolling by language group

	Reasons For Enrolling												Total*	
Language	Job		Improve skills		Familiarisation with workplace		Improve business		Promotion		Other			
Arabic	14	46.7%	7	23.3%	4	13.3%	0	0.0%	3	10.0%	2	6.7%	30	100%
Bosnian	14	58.3%	7	29.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	4.2%	2	8.3%	24	100%
Cantonese	8	16.3%	23	46.9%	11	22.4%	0	0.0%	5	10.2%	2	4.1%	49	100%
Spanish	16	53.3%	5	16.7%	7	23.3%	0	0.0%	2	6.7%	0	0.0%	30	100%
Turkish	20	48.8%	10	24.4%	7	17.1%	1	2.4%	3	7.3%	0	0.0%	41	100%
Vietnamese	17	60.7%	4	14.3%	2	7.1%	0	0.0%	5	17.9%	0	0.0%	28	100%
Total	89	44.1%	56	27.7%	31	15.3%	1	0.5%	19	9.4%	6	3.0%	202	100%

Note: * Some focus group participants contributed more than one response. Totals indicate responses rather than focus group participants.

Table 4: Provider of training by language group

Language	Provider of training									
	TAFE		Private		Workplace		Other		Total*	
Arabic	12	80.0%	2	13.3%	1	6.7%	0	0.0%	15	100%
Bosnian	17	89.5%	2	10.5%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	19	100%
Cantonese	8	26.7%	9	30.0%	11	36.7%	2	6.7%	30	100%
Spanish	13	54.2%	9	37.5%	2	8.3%	0	0.0%	24	100%
Turkish	21	84.0%	4	16.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	25	100%
Vietnamese	13	76.5%	2	11.8%	2	11.8%	0	0.0%	17	100%
Total	84	64.6%	28	21.5%	16	12.3%	2	1.5%	130	100%

Note: * Some focus group participants contributed more than one response. Totals indicate responses rather than focus group participants.

Table 5: Examples of courses participants had undertaken grouped by Field of Study (FOS) and excluding VET Multifield

01 Land and marine resources, animal husbandry	
02 Architecture, building	
03 Arts, humanities and social sciences	Interpreting, LOTE,
04 Business, administration, economics	Office administration, bookkeeping, accounting,
05 Education	
06 Engineering, surveying	Mechanics, computer studies, electrical, panel beating, plumbing, electronics, sound technician, toolmaking, automotive,
07 Health, community services	Home and community care, aged care, nursing, childcare, first aid, occupational health and safety, community development,
08 Law, legal studies	
09 Science	
10 Veterinary science, animal care	
11 Services, hospitality, transportation	Hairdressing / beautician, hospitality, commercial cooking, commercial driving, floristry

Table 6: Age distribution by language group

	Age							
Language	18–24		25–44		45–64		Total	
Arabic	14	63.6%	6	27.3%	2	9.1%	22	100%
Bosnian	8	33.3%	12	50.0%	4	16.7%	24	100%
Cantonese	4	16.7%	12	50.0%	8	33.3%	24	100%
Spanish	6	25.0%	10	41.7%	8	33.3%	24	100%
Turkish	7	29.2%	13	54.2%	4	16.7%	24	100%
Vietnamese	12	54.5%	6	27.3%	4	18.2%	22	100%

Table 7: Gender distribution by language group

	Gender					
Language	Male		Female		Total	
Arabic	7	31.8%	15	68.2%	22	100%
Bosnian	10	41.7%	14	58.3%	24	100%
Cantonese	13	54.2%	11	45.8%	24	100%
Spanish	12	50.0%	12	50.0%	24	100%
Turkish	5	20.8%	19	79.2%	24	100%
Vietnamese	9	40.9%	13	59.1%	22	100%

Table 8: Employment status by language group

	Employment Status					
Language	Employed		Not in Work		Total	
Arabic	12	54.5%	10	45.5%	22	100%
Bosnian	12	50.0%	12	50.0%	24	100%
Cantonese	13	56.5%	10	43.5%	23	100%
Spanish	14	58.3%	10	41.7%	24	100%
Turkish	11	45.8%	13	54.2%	24	100%
Vietnamese	11	50.0%	11	50.0%	22	100%

Note: * Not all respondents were actively seeking employment

Table 9: Enrolment status by language group

Language	Enrolment status						Total	
	Enrolled			Never enrolled				
	<i>Completed</i>		<i>Did not complete</i>					
Arabic	7	31.8%	8	36.4%	7	31.8%	22	100%
Bosnian	11	45.8%	8	33.3%	5	20.8%	24	100%
Cantonese	10	41.7%	5	20.8%	9	37.5%	24	100%
Spanish	9	37.5%	7	29.2%	8	33.3%	24	100%
Turkish	11	45.8%	7	29.2%	6	25.0%	24	100%
Vietnamese	7	31.8%	8	36.4%	7	31.8%	22	100%

Table 10: Length of settlement by language group

Time in Australia								
Language	Less than 5 years		5–10 years		Over 10 years		Total	
Arabic	8	36.4%	4	18.2%	10	45.5%	22	100%
Bosnian	15	62.5%	9	37.5%	0	0.0%	24	100%
Cantonese	5	20.8%	6	25.0%	13	54.2%	24	100%
Spanish	2	8.3%	10	41.7%	12	50.0%	24	100%
Turkish	6	25.0%	7	29.2%	11	45.8%	24	100%
Vietnamese	4	18.2%	6	27.3%	12	54.5%	22	100%

Table 11: Enrolment status by length of settlement by language group – Arabic

Enrolment status – Arabic				
Time in Australia	Enrolled		Never enrolled	Total
	<i>Completed</i>	<i>Did not complete</i>		
Less than 5 years	2	1	5	8
5–10 years	1	3	0	4
Over 10 years	4	4	2	10
Total	7	8	7	22

Enrolment status – Arabic				
Time in Australia	Enrolled		Never enrolled	Total
	<i>Completed</i>	<i>Did not complete</i>		
Less than 5 years	25.0%	12.5%	62.5%	100.0%
5–10 years	25.0%	75.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Over 10 years	40.0%	40.0%	20.0%	100.0%
Total	31.8%	36.4%	31.8%	100.0%

Table 12: Enrolment status by gender by language group – Arabic

Enrolment status – Arabic				
Gender	Enrolled		Never enrolled	Total
	<i>Completed</i>	<i>Did not complete</i>		
Females	7	5	4	16
Males	0	3	3	6
Total	7	8	7	22

Enrolment status – Arabic				
Gender	Enrolled		Never enrolled	Total
	<i>Completed</i>	<i>Did not complete</i>		
Females	43.8%	31.3%	25.0%	100%
Males	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%	100%
Total	31.8%	36.4%	31.8%	100%

Table 13: Enrolment status by age by language group – Arabic

Enrolment status – Arabic				
Age	Enrolled		Never enrolled	Total
	<i>Completed</i>	<i>Did not complete</i>		
18–24 years	4	5	5	14
25–44 years	3	1	2	6
45–64 years	0	2	0	2
Total	7	8	7	22

Enrolment status – Arabic				
Age	Enrolled		Never enrolled	Total
	<i>Completed</i>	<i>Did not complete</i>		
18–24 years	28.6%	35.7%	35.7%	100%
25–44 years	50.0%	16.7%	33.3%	100%
45–64 years	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	100%
Total	31.8%	36.4%	31.8%	100%

Table 14: Enrolment status by length of settlement by language group – Bosnian

Enrolment status – Bosnian				
Time in Australia	Enrolled		Never enrolled	Total
	<i>Completed</i>	<i>Did not complete</i>		
Less than 5 years	6	8	2	16
5–10 years	5		3	8
Over 10 years	0	0	0	0
Total	11	8	5	24

Enrolment status – Bosnian				
Time in Australia	Enrolled		Never enrolled	Total
	<i>Completed</i>	<i>Did not complete</i>		
Less than 5 years	37.5%	50.0%	12.5%	100.0%
5–10 years	62.5%	0.0%	37.5%	100.0%
Over 10 years	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Total	45.8%	33.3%	20.8%	100.0%

Table 15: Enrolment status by gender by language group – Bosnian

Enrolment status – Bosnian				
Gender	Enrolled		Never enrolled	Total
	<i>Completed</i>	<i>Did not complete</i>		
Females	6	4	4	14
Males	5	4	1	10
Total	11	8	5	24

Enrolment status – Bosnian				
Gender	Enrolled		Never enrolled	Total
	<i>Completed</i>	<i>Did not complete</i>		
Females	45.8%	33.3%	20.8%	100%
Males	50.0%	40.0%	10.0%	100%
Total	45.8%	33.3%	20.8%	100%

Table 16: Enrolment status by age by language group – Bosnian

Enrolment status – Bosnian				
Age	Enrolled		Never enrolled	Total
	<i>Completed</i>	<i>Did not complete</i>		
18–24 years	3	2	3	8
25–44 years	5	6	1	12
45–64 years	3	0	1	4
Total	11	8	5	24

Enrolment status – Bosnian				
Age	Enrolled		Never enrolled	Total
	<i>Completed</i>	<i>Did not complete</i>		
18–24 years	37.5%	25.0%	37.5%	100%
25–44 years	41.7%	50.0%	8.3%	100%
45–64 years	75.0%	0.0%	25.0%	100%
Total	45.8%	33.3%	20.8%	100%

Table 17: Enrolment status by length of settlement by language group – Cantonese

Enrolment status – Cantonese			
Time in Australia	Enrolled <i>Did not complete</i>		Never enrolled
	Completed		Total
Less than 5 years	2	1	2
5–10 years	3	0	3
Over 10 years	5	4	4
Total	10	5	9

Enrolment status – Cantonese			
Time in Australia	Enrolled <i>Did not complete</i>		Never enrolled
	Completed		Total
Less than 5 years	40.0%	20.0%	40.0%
5–10 years	50.0%	0.0%	50.0%
Over 10 years	38.5%	30.8%	30.8%
Total	41.7%	20.8%	37.5%

Table 18: Enrolment status by gender by language group – Cantonese

Enrolment status – Cantonese			
Gender	Enrolled <i>Did not complete</i>		Never enrolled
	Completed		Total
			3
Females	6	3	2
Males	4	2	7
Total	10	5	9

Enrolment status – Cantonese			
Gender	Enrolled <i>Did not complete</i>		Never enrolled
	Completed		Total
Females	54.5%	27.3%	18.2%
Males	30.8%	15.4%	53.8%
Total	41.7%	20.8%	37.5%

Table 19: Enrolment status by age by language group – Cantonese

Enrolment status – Cantonese				
Age	Enrolled		Never enrolled	Total
	Completed	Did not complete		
18–24 years	2	1	1	4
25–44 years	6	2	4	12
45–64 years	2	2	4	8
Total	10	5	9	24

Enrolment status – Cantonese				
Age	Enrolled		Never enrolled	Total
	Completed	Did not complete		
18–24 years	50.0%	25.0%	25.0%	100%
25–44 years	50.0%	16.7%	33.3%	100%
45–64 years	25.0%	25.0%	50.0%	100%
Total	41.7%	20.8%	37.5%	100%

Table 20: Enrolment status by length of settlement by language group – Spanish

Enrolment status – Spanish				
Time in Australia	Enrolled		Never enrolled	Total
	Completed	Did not complete		
Less than 5 years	2	0	0	2
5–10 years	4	6	0	10
Over 10 years	3	1	8	12
Total	9	7	8	24

Enrolment status – Spanish				
Time in Australia	Enrolled		Never enrolled	Total
	Completed	Did not complete		
Less than 5 years	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
5–10 years	40.0%	60.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Over 10 years	25.0%	8.3%	66.7%	100.0%
Total	37.5%	29.2%	33.3%	100.0%

Table 21: Enrolment status by language group by gender – Spanish

Enrolment status – Spanish			
Gender	Enrolled <i>Completed Did not complete</i>		Never enrolled
Females	4	3	5
Males	5	4	3
Total	9	7	8

Enrolment status – Spanish			
Gender	Enrolled <i>Completed Did not complete</i>		Never enrolled
Females	33.3%	25.0%	41.7%
Males	41.7%	33.3%	25.0%
Total	37.5%	29.2%	33.3%

Table 22: Enrolment status by language group by age – Spanish

Enrolment status – Spanish			
Age	Enrolled <i>Completed Did not complete</i>		Never enrolled
18–24 years	3	3	0
25–44 years	2	4	3
45–64 years	4	0	5
Total	9	7	8

Enrolment status – Spanish			
Age	Enrolled <i>Completed Did not complete</i>		Never enrolled
18–24 years	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%
25–44 years	22.2%	44.4%	33.3%
45–64 years	44.4%	0.0%	55.6%
Total	37.5%	29.2%	33.3%

Table 23: Enrolment status by length of settlement by language group – Turkish

Enrolment status – Turkish				
Time in Australia	Enrolled		Never enrolled	Total
	<i>Completed</i>	<i>Did not complete</i>		
Less than 5 years	2	4	0	6
5–10 years	6	0	1	7
Over 10 years	3	3	5	11
Total	11	7	6	24

Enrolment status – Turkish				
Time in Australia	Enrolled		Never enrolled	Total
	Completed	Did not complete		
Less than 5 years	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	100.0%
5–10 years	85.7%	0.0%	14.3%	100.0%
Over 10 years	27.3%	27.3%	45.5%	100.0%
Total	45.8%	29.2%	25.0%	100.0%

Table 24: Enrolment status by gender by language group – Turkish

Enrolment status – Turkish				
Gender	Enrolled		Never enrolled	Total
	Completed	Did not complete		
Females	8	6	5	19
Males	3	1	1	5
Total	11	7	6	24

Enrolment status – Turkish				
Gender	Enrolled		Never enrolled	Total
	Completed	Did not complete		
Females	42.1%	31.6%	26.3%	100%
Males	60.0%	20.0%	20.0%	100%
Total	45.8%	29.2%	25.0%	100%

Table 25: Enrolment status by age by language group – Turkish

Enrolment status – Turkish				
Age	Enrolled		Never enrolled	Total
	<i>Completed</i>	<i>Did not complete</i>		
18–24 years	2	4	1	7
25–44 years	8	3	2	13
45–64 years	1	0	3	4
Total	11	7	6	24

Enrolment status – Turkish				
Age	Enrolled		Never enrolled	Total
	<i>Completed</i>	<i>Did not complete</i>		
18–24 years	28.6%	57.1%	14.3%	100%
25–44 years	61.5%	23.1%	15.4%	100%
45–64 years	25.0%	0.0%	75.0%	100%
Total	45.8%	29.2%	25.0%	100%

Table 26: Enrolment status by length of settlement by language group – Vietnamese

Enrolment status – Vietnamese				
Time in Australia	Enrolled		Never enrolled	Total
	<i>Completed</i>	<i>Did not complete</i>		
Less than 5 years	3	1	0	4
5–10 years	3	2	1	6
Over 10 years	1	5	6	12
Total	7	8	7	22

Enrolment status – Vietnamese				
Time in Australia	Enrolled		Never enrolled	Total
	<i>Completed</i>	<i>Did not complete</i>		
Less than 5 years	75.0%	25.0%	0.0%	100.0%
5–10 years	50.0%	33.3%	16.7%	100.0%
Over 10 years	8.3%	41.7%	50.0%	100.0%
Total	31.8%	36.4%	31.8%	100.0%

Table 27: Enrolment status by gender by language group – Vietnamese

Enrolment status – Vietnamese				
Gender	Enrolled <i>Did not Completed complete</i>		Never enrolled	Total
Females	4	4	5	13
Males	3	4	2	9
Total	7	8	7	22

Enrolment status – Vietnamese				
Gender	Enrolled <i>Did not Completed complete</i>		Never enrolled	Total
Females	30.8%	30.8%	38.5%	100%
Males	33.3%	44.4%	22.2%	100%
Total	31.8%	36.4%	31.8%	0%

Table 28: Enrolment status by age by language group – Vietnamese

Enrolment status – Vietnamese				
Age	Enrolled <i>Did not Completed complete</i>		Never enrolled	Total
18-24 years	4	5	3	12
25-44 years	1	2	3	6
45-64 years	2	1	1	4
Total	7	8	7	22

Enrolment status – Vietnamese				
Age	Enrolled <i>Did not Completed complete</i>		Never enrolled	Total
18-24 years	33.3%	41.7%	25.0%	100%
25-44 years	16.7%	33.3%	50.0%	100%
45-64 years	50.0%	25.0%	25.0%	100%
Total	31.8%	36.4%	31.8%	100%

Appendix D: Snapshots across language groups by demographic variable

Arabic speakers have:

- ✧ course/module withdrawal rates 51.1% above the average and
- ✧ unsuccessful assessment outcomes 43.8% above the average.

Bosnian speakers have above average participation in VET.

Cantonese speakers have:

- ✧ lowest participation rates of the six language groups, well below the average,
- ✧ lowest enrolment (20.6%) in the VET multi-field education FOS of the six language groups;
- ✧ a broader range of enrolments across VET FOS and
- ✧ the highest successful assessment outcomes (including those who speak English as the main language at home).

Spanish speakers have:

- ✧ participation rates comparable to those who speak English as the main language at home (13.2% as opposed to 12.6%) and
- ✧ the second lowest enrolments (after the Cantonese speakers) in the VET multi-field education FOS of the six language groups (29.9% compared to the 20.6% for Cantonese speakers).

Turkish speakers have:

- ✧ unsuccessful assessment outcomes 43.8% above the average,
- ✧ module withdrawal rates 60.7% above the average and
- ✧ the highest enrolments (42.7%) in the VET multi-field education FOS of the six language groups.

Vietnamese speakers have:

- ✧ the lowest successful assessment outcomes of all the six language groups,
- ✧ the highest module withdrawal rates, 65.5% above the average and
- ✧ the second highest enrolments (after the Turkish speakers) in the VET multi-field education FOS of the six language groups (38.6.9% compared to 42.7% for Turkish speakers).

Appendix E: Summary of the emergent themes arising from the in-depth interviews and focus groups data

Variable	Arabic	Bosnian	Cantonese	Spanish	Turkish	Vietnamese
Age	Young people demonstrate low level knowledge of VET. Young people see VET as of limited value. Young people's oral English competence may sometimes mask low written literacy and create obstacles.	Understanding of VET amongst both young & old. Young enrol for range of reasons - pathway to university, way of 'sorting out' what to do next.	Understanding of VET amongst both young & old. Both young and old enrol for range of reasons –improve skills, voluntary work.	Slightly better understanding of VET amongst young but still limited.	Slightly better understanding of VET amongst young but still limited.	Young people demonstrate low level knowledge of VET. Young people see VET as of limited value. Low English proficiency may create obstacles to participation . Young people do not see cultural differences as obstacles to participation.
Gender	Cultural, transport and childcare issues may stop women from enrolling. Slightly better understanding of VET amongst women but still limited.	No perceived gender differences.	No perceived gender differences – both men and women may find it difficult to participate in class discussion due to cultural differences.	No perceived gender differences.	Cultural, transport & childcare issues may stop women from enrolling.	Childcare issues may stop women from enrolling. Women may find it difficult to participate in class discussion due to cultural differences.
Proficiency in English	Believe can succeed with limited English if support is given. Young are felt to have hidden literacy problems.	English skills seen to be important in facilitating successful outcomes BUT Believe can succeed with limited English if support is given .	Believe can succeed with limited English if support is given.	English skills seen to be important in facilitating successful outcomes BUT Believe can succeed with limited English if support is given.	Believe can succeed with limited English if support is given. Concerned that English skills can prevent recognition of vocational competence.	Low English skills will stop people from enrolling. Young are felt to have hidden literacy problems.

Variable	Arabic	Bosnian	Cantonese	Spanish	Turkish	Vietnamese
Length of settlement	Little difference in attitude between newer arrivals and longer established members of community.	Newer arrivals show wider understanding of VET and greater participation.	Little difference in attitude between newer arrivals and longer established members of community.	Newer arrivals show wider understanding of VET and greater participation.	Newer arrivals show wider understanding of VET and greater participation.	Newer arrivals show wider understanding of VET and greater participation.
Size of community	Lack of role models and targeted programs seen to be a problem.	Community is felt to be able to access information despite lack of extensive support infrastructure.	Solid community infrastructure is seen to assist with access to information and targeted programs in ethno-specific RTOs.	Access to information is felt to be sketchy.	Access to information is felt to be sketchy.	Access to information is felt to be sketchy despite community support networks.

Appendix F: Survey documents

In-depth interview instrument

Community:

Interviewee

Date / Time

VET PARTICIPATION AND COMPLETION OUTCOMES OF PEOPLE FROM A LANGUAGE OTHER THAN ENGLISH BACKGROUND

Interviews with community intermediaries
--

Introduction, thanks and explanation of purpose of research as well as definition of key terms:

We are researching the participation rates in VET for six ethnic communities– Arabic, Bosnian, Cantonese, Spanish, Turkish and Vietnamese speaking.

Vocational training takes place in TAFE Institutes, community organisations, private providers and the workplace. For this research we are not talking about English as a second language programs but are interested in VET courses such as hospitality, office administration, plumbing, hairdressing...

Section 1 - General

1. On a scale of 1-5, where 1 = very high and 5 = very low, what do you think is your community's understanding of the different education sectors especially school/compulsory, VET and higher education / university?
 - ☐ 1 very high
 - ☐ 2
 - ☐ 3
 - ☐ 4
 - ☐ 5 very low
2. Using that same scale of 1-5, what do you think is the level of **participation** in VET amongst members of your community?
 - ☐ 1 very high
 - ☐ 2
 - ☐ 3
 - ☐ 4
 - ☐ 5 very low
- 2a. Why do you think this is?
3. What about **finishing** the training once someone has started a course? In your experience do people complete training programs in which they have enrolled?
 - ☐ 1. Yes
 - ☐ 2. No
- 3a. Why do you think this is?

In the next stage we'll explore in more detail some of the issues that may affect participation and completion. I'd like to ask you to think about some VET programs:

- you have conducted in your organisation;
- outside your organisation to which you have referred students and/or
- programs in the workplace your clients have attempted.



Section 2 - Role of language

- 4. Do students need a specific level of English?
 - ☐ 1. Yes
 - ☐ 2. No
- 4b. If so, are they told about the level of English they need?
 - ☐ 1. Yes
 - ☐ 2. No
- 5. Are they supported?
 - ☐ 1. Yes
 - ☐ 2. No
- 5a. If so, how?
- 6. What are effective types of support you know about?
- 7. In your experience, what attitude do prospective students have to the English language demands in VET?
- 8. Are there differences in attitudes within groups in your community to meeting the English language skills needed in VET? (E.g. are some groups more confident than other groups in the community?)
 - ☐ 1. Yes
 - ☐ 2. No
 - ☐ 3. Don't know
- 8a. If yes, what are these differences?

Section 3 - Cultural factors

9. Are there aspects of the Australian adult education and training system that are unfamiliar or appear strange? (E.g. role of student, role of teacher, classroom interaction, gender roles...)

- ☐ 1. Yes
- ☐ 2. No
- ☐ 3. Don't know

9a. If yes, what are they?

10. Do these differences create barriers to participation?

- ☐ 1. Yes
- ☐ 2. No
- ☐ 3. Don't know

11a. If yes, Why? How?

I would now like you to think about some specific VET courses that you know:

11. Has the training included the clarification of cultural issues such as the explanation of workplace routines, professional jargon? Have culturally inclusive resources been provided?

- ☐ 1. Yes
- ☐ 2. No
- ☐ 3. Don't know

12a. Do you think this is an important part of the training?

- ☐ 1. Yes
- ☐ 2. No
- ☐ 3. Don't know

12b. Why?

Another way that culture can create barriers is when only the mainstream cultural values are upheld. (E.g.: In the welfare sector the rights of the individual are seen as beyond question and group/family obligation may be dismissed as not important)

13. How do you think these potential 'cultural conflicts' affect students studying VET? (E.g. Are differences explained? Is it possible to bring up 'other ways'? Do students feel able to question these values?)

Section 4 - Pathways

14. What do people expect to achieve from English as a second language (ESL) programs ?

15. Do you think people see ESL as a stepping stone to VET?

☐ 1. Yes

☐ 2. No

15a. What do you think?

☐ 1. Yes

☐ 2. No

16. Do people understand the process of moving from ESL to VET?

☐ 1. Yes

☐ 2. No

16a. What in your view needs to be in place for people to better understand the move?
Why?

Section 5 - Awareness & perceptions

17. Do you think people in your community understand VET?

☐ 1. Yes

☐ 2. No

18. How do they see it and what does it mean to them?

19. How do they see it in relation to HE

20. Do they see any benefits in VET? For themselves? For their children?

☐ 1. Yes

☐ 2. No

21. How do people find out about VET?

22. What sources of information would be most trusted? Why?

23. Who would seek information?

24. Are there groups who may have difficulty getting access to information?

I would now like to talk about traditional media as a means of delivering information.

25. Do you have newspapers that serve your community?

☐ 1. Yes – examples?

☐ 2. No/Don't know

26. Do you have radio stations/programming that serve your community?

- ☐ 1. Yes – examples?
- ☐ 2. No/Don't know

27. Are there any other forms of media (E.g. community TV) that are popular?

- ☐ 1. Yes – what are they?
- ☐ 2. No/Don't know

28. Are there particular media that cater to different groups in the community?

- ☐ 1. Yes – examples?
- ☐ 2. No/Don't know

29. Let's talk about different ways of delivering information. I have a list of media and other possible information sources and I would like you to tell me which of these you believe would be effective in providing information to your community about VET?

- ☐ 1. Ethnic newspapers
- ☐ 2. Radio stations
- ☐ 3. Other media (community TV)
- ☐ 4. Community organisations/networks
- ☐ 5. Community newsletters/journals
- ☐ 6. Community events and festivals
- ☐ 7. Community leaders
- ☐ 8. Others – examples?

30. Could you think now about the particular ways in which information could be provided and let me know if you agree or disagree that these are useful ways of providing information?

- ☐ 1. Written materials (eg. brochures, press adverts)?
- ☐ 2. Audio-visual materials (videos / audio tapes, radio adverts)?
- ☐ 3. Face-to-face information sessions and meetings?
- ☐ 4. A 1800 number? Would people use the telephone to seek information?
- ☐ 5. Visiting a web-site?

30a. Is it the same across the community or are some methods more appropriate for some groups?

Thank you.

Are there any other issues you would like to bring up?

Facilitators' briefing notes

BRIEFING NOTES

The Context

We are researching the participation rates in VET for six ethnic communities– Arabic, Bosnian, Cantonese, Spanish, Turkish and Vietnamese speaking.

Victorians from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds face a number of potential barriers that may limit their effective participation in VET.

Some pertinent findings include:

- A significantly low level of understanding of the VET system both amongst established and new arrival ethnic communities. (Department of Premier and Cabinet, Victoria, 2001).
- An undervaluing of the domestic VET system, especially amongst people from the former socialist regimes of Eastern Europe. (Department of Premier and Cabinet, Victoria, 2001).
- Dissatisfaction with the generalist nature of English language training and concerns about the lack of vocational pathways from English language programs. (Department of Premier and Cabinet, Victoria, 1996, Victorian Multicultural Commission, 2001).
- Students born in a country where the first language is not English are more likely to enrol in lower skill level preparatory courses and less likely to do vocationally specific or high-skill courses. (NCVER 2001b)
- Participation by members of culturally diverse communities in the new apprenticeship system is lower than it should be. (NCVER 2001a).

The current research I am undertaking seeks to better understand the barriers faced by people from diverse cultural and language backgrounds.

The research is drilling down to explore in greater detail specific issues such as

- What are the levels of awareness and understanding of VET? How is VET perceived?
- What role do English as a second language (ESL) programs play in providing pathways and linkages to VET?
- What is the perceived role of English language proficiency in participation and module/course completion outcomes?
- What role do cultural expectations and norms play in participation and module/course completion outcomes?

Issues for discussion with focus groups will include:

Awareness and perceptions of VET –

What type of training courses have people enrolled in? Why? Where have they done this training? Why? What is the level of awareness? What attitudes exist about TAFE? Why do people enrol?

Information seeking –

Where, how and when are community members getting their information about VET? What are the most credible sources of information for the community? Why? Which family member is most likely to seek information?

Barriers to participation –

This section will require sensitivity. We must be aware that those who enrolled in VET and did not complete may censor their responses to ‘save face’. Other times people are not clear about why they did not complete a course. Questions have been written in an open and general way. Do follow this approach when asking the questions in your community language.

English language skills –What is the level of English skills required? Is support provided to those who need it? Are there differences in confidence amongst different sub-segments of the community? Was this a barrier to participation / completion?

Culture – Is the classroom situation strange? Is it possible to bring up different cultural values? Are other vocational skills incorporated – different cuisines, clothing, building styles? What are student expectations?

Pathways – What do people expect from ESL classes? Are they satisfied? Is ESL seen as a pathway to VET?

Information seeking and provision – What are the specific sources of information delivery? Are they effective? Are there community media opportunities (community newsletters, special events, etc.)? What is the role of community advocates? Is there particular media for different groups in the community? How effective are audio-visual materials? Will community members contact a Help-line? Will community members visit a website? Why or why not?

Research Requirements

You are required to recruit, run and report on a focus group discussion (as per matrix below), lasting a maximum of 90 minutes, in your language.

Language	General group	Young (18-24) group	Women only group	State	Total # groups
Arabic		✓	✓	Vic	2
Bosnian	✓ ✓			Qld	2
Cantonese	✓ ✓			NSW	2
Spanish	✓ ✓			NSW	2
Turkish	✓		✓	Vic	2
Vietnamese	✓	✓		Qld	2

General

- This group needs to be gender balanced
- It should include employed and unemployed people
- *It should include:*
 - 18-24 year olds – 3-4 participants
 - 25-44 year olds – 6 participants
 - 45-64 year olds – 2-3 participants
- It should include those who:
 - enrolled and completed
 - enrolled did not complete
 - have never enrolled
- It should have a diversity of settlement history – new arrivals and longer established

Young people (18-24)

- This group needs to be gender balanced
- This group should include employed and unemployed young people
- It should include those who:
 - enrolled and completed
 - enrolled did not complete
 - have never enrolled
- It should have a diversity of settlement history – new arrivals and longer established

Women

- This group should include employed and unemployed women
- *It should include:*
 - 18-24 year olds – 3-4 participants
 - 25-44 year olds – 6 participants
 - 45-64 year olds – 2-3 participants
- It should include those who:
 - enrolled and completed
 - enrolled did not complete
 - have never enrolled
- It should have a diversity of settlement history – new arrivals and longer established

Audio Recording

It is mandatory to record your focus group. Please notify potential participants at the time of recruiting that the discussion will be recorded. People can then elect to not participate.

Before you begin the focus group, please also advise that you will be audio-taping the session and seek the group's permission. By now, there should be no problems, but if by any chance, anyone refuses to be audio-taped, make sure they can comfortably leave the session. As you know, no pressure should be applied.

Please test the recording equipment prior to running the group to ensure that the quality is sufficient – we must be able to make out what each person is saying.

ALL PERSONAL INFORMATION WILL BE KEPT PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

Quotes

Let people know too that we will be using some of the discussion recorded during the session. The way we will do this is to use the quote in English and mention only the language group where the quote was made. We will not name any individual. Again, if any one is not happy for their contribution to be used, even after you have explained the process, reassure them that you will note it in the notes you take.

Make sure you do transcribe everything BUT annotate any parts of the transcript that should not be directly used in the final report.

If in doubt, let's discuss as you are beginning to transcribe the focus group discussion.

Recruiting

You will need to recruit for 2 focus groups of 12 people each from your community.

Different language groups will be required to recruit people from different "categories" (see attached matrix for the category you will be required to recruit for your group). It is also important that the group reflects the key characteristics of your community. Please get each member of your group to fill out a bookings sheet. (**Attached**)

Venue

Each researcher will be required to arrange his/her individual dates and venues for the group interviews. Suitable venues include community centres, neighbourhood house etc. **As soon as you have completed recruiting and arranging the venue and time, please submit these details to me.**

Discussion Guide

Each group interview is to be conducted using the survey instrument. (A copy of this focus group guide is attached).

Timing

Please let me know the details (time, place, and venue) of your group by **April 18 2003**

Please run the groups between **22 – 27 April 2003**

Reports are to be submitted no later than **2 May 2003**

Focus Groups Report

Focus group testing is the second stage of this research project. Stage one included in-depth discussions with community workers and leaders of your community. A copy of the report from these consultations is also attached and will give you background information and will help guide you to explore issues that are specific to your community. **It may be that focus group discussions raise issues that contradict the information collected during the in-depth interviews. It is important to highlight any themes that arise from your group that directly conflict with the themes presented in the interview report.**

Some of the questions require that you take a note of numbers. Please do remember to jot down numbers as you are going through the questions. Whilst some of the information is about people's opinions and feelings, percentages or numbers are still useful in determining how people in the group see an issue. This information should be included as requested. A handy way of recording numbers is by making quick annotations on the focus group discussion guide. After wards, when you are writing up the report, you can include this information in the relevant piece of text.

Quotes (no names but some demographic information such as 'woman, newly arrived') are very useful in making the final report more personal.

A report summarising the discussion and highlighting issues raised by group participants is to be provided on completion of the focus groups. (A template format will be provided electronically. Please use this to write your report. A hard copy is also attached).

The report **MUST** be supplied as an electronic version, either by email or on floppy and preferably as a Microsoft Word Document.

It is very important that the format of the report follows the discussion guide headings.
--

Incentives

You will receive a postal money order for each focus group to distribute among the group. You may use all the money for cash incentives, or if you feel it would be more appealing to provide an incentive of a meal that is fine. Or you may decide to do a combination of both. Either way, please keep receipts for these and also please get the members of the group to sign the Focus Group Incentive Registry, stating that they have received their cash incentive. (**Attached**).

Focus group guide

Community:

Facilitator

Date / Time

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (VET) PARTICIPATION AND COMPLETION OUTCOMES OF PEOPLE FROM A LANGUAGE OTHER THAN ENGLISH BACKGROUND

Focus groups with community members

Introduction, thanks and explanation of purpose of research as well as definition of key terms.

Do make sure that you keep in mind that VET can take place in a number of settings – TAFE institutes, private providers, workplaces, off-campus through flexible delivery...

You may need to prompt people to remember that VET is for young school-leavers, the unemployed as well as those already in the workforce – employees, employers and small business owners.

You may also need to run through some of the diverse training available – e.g. hospitality, office administration, plumbing, hairdressing, child care, metallurgy, animal care.

Finally, please orient questioning to the particular makeup of the focus group – general, women and young people. Make sure you explore the issues raised during the in-depth stage and summarised in your briefing notes.

Section 1 – Participation in VET – Awareness and perceptions

- As far as you know, what type of training is provided in VET?
- In your view, who enrolls in VET? Why do they enrol?
- What courses have you done in the past, are currently enrolled in or would like to enrol in?
- What were or would be your reasons for enrolling? **(Facilitator please note how many for each)**
 - Get a job
 - Improve skills
 - Familiarise myself with Australian work practices
 - Improve my business
 - Improve my chances of promotion
 - Others
- Where have you done your training? **(Facilitator please note how many for each)**
 - TAFE institute,
 - Private provider or
 - Workplace?

- Where would you choose to do your training? **(Facilitator please note how many for each)**
 - TAFE institute,
 - Private provider or
 - Workplace? Discuss
- What are the benefits in your view, about doing training at
 - a TAFE institute,
 - a private provider or
 - your workplace? Discuss
- What are the problems in your view, about doing training at
 - a TAFE institute,
 - a private provider or
 - your workplace? Discuss
- Are there any courses that you would like to enrol in but have not to date? Why is that?
- How do you feel about VET generally? What does it mean to you?
- How do you see it in relation to university?
- Do you see any benefits in VET? For yourself? (For your children? *If appropriate*) What are they?

Section 2 – Participation in VET – Possible barriers

In this section we'll explore in more detail some of the issues that may affect participation and completion.

English Language

- Do you need to have a certain level of English to complete a VET course? Discuss?
- If so, is this information provided when you enrol?
- Is additional support available if it is needed? Give examples
- How do you feel about your English skills? Do you feel they are good enough to get through a VET course?
- Is it possible in your view to complete a VET course with low English skills? Discuss

Cultural factors

- Do you find aspects of the Australian vocational training system unfamiliar or strange? (E.g. role of student, role of teacher, classroom interaction, gender roles...) What are they?
 - Are these differences difficult to overcome?
 - Do they stop people from enrolling?
 - How can these problems be overcome?
- In your experience, does the training cover an explanation of workplace routines? (E.g. how to behave in the workplace, professional jargon).
 - Do you think this is important? Discuss
- Have culturally inclusive resources been provided? (E.g. case studies have included situations with people from your cultural background)
 - Do you think this is important? Discuss
 - What happens if it isn't part of the training? Would this cause you to leave the course?
- Has it been possible to provide other views that may be different to the views of the teacher and other students but that you value as part of your culture and/or religion? (E.g. valuing the group rather than the individual, showing deference to more senior people)
 - Do you think this is important? Discuss
 - What happens if it isn't part of the training? Would you leave the course?
- Some of you might have wanted to start a business to meet the needs of your community. (E.g. a restaurant cooking the food of your community, manufacturing clothes worn by members of your community, hairdressing salon to cater for tastes of your community). Has the training been adapted to make sure your training needs are met?

Pathways

- What did you expect to achieve from English as a second language (ESL) programs ?
 - Did you achieve your aims? Discuss
- Did you see ESL as a stepping stone to VET? Discuss
 - Is this what happened? Discuss
- What in your view needs to be in place for people to understand the move from ESL to VET?

Section 3 – Participation in VET – Information seeking

- How did you find out VET? (E.g. ethnic press, radio, written material, community worker, word-of-mouth, etc)
- How easy was it to find information about VET programs? Discuss
- Did you encounter any problems when you were trying to get information? Discuss
- Who or what would you trust most to provide such information? Why?
- What would have made it easier for you to get information about VET?
- Who in your family usually does this sort of investigation? Why?

Section 4 – Participation in VET – Information provision

- How important are the following issues when planning information campaigns for your community:
 - English language proficiency?
 - Literacy in first language? (E.g. written, spoken word)
 - Access to ethnic media (press, radio, TV)?
 - Existence of community organisations and networks?
 - Any others?
- Which groups in your community face the greatest problems in receiving information?

- What are the best ways for the Government to provide information to your community?
 - Brochures in your community language?
 - Audio-visual materials in your community language?
 - Direct to your home?
 - Information in the local library?
 - Via community organisations?
 - Ethnic media – papers and / or radio?
 - Local papers?
 - Face-to-face information sessions in your community language?
 - Community events / festivals?
 - A 1800 number?
 - A web-site?
 - Others?
- Is it the same across the community or are some methods more appropriate for some groups?